

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Registration Form

VLR 9/6/6
NRHP draft

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations for individual properties and districts. See instructions in *How to Complete the National Register of Historic Places Registration Form* (National Register Bulletin 16A). Complete each item by marking "X" in the appropriate box or by entering the information requested. If any item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, architectural classification, materials, and areas of significance, enter only categories and subcategories from the instructions. Place additional entries and narrative items on continuation sheets (NPS Form 10-900a). Use a typewriter, word processor, or computer, to complete all items.

1. Name of Property

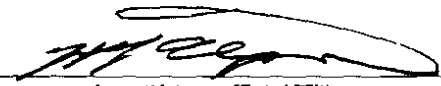
historic name Long's Chapel
other names/site number Long's Chapel; Old Athens Church; Athens Colored School; DHR file no. 082-5264

2. Location

street & number 1334B Fridley's Gap Road (SR 811) N/A not for publication
city or town Harrisonburg X vicinity
state Virginia code VA county Rockingham code 165 zip code 22802

3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, as amended, I hereby certify that this X nomination request for determination of eligibility meets the documentation standards for registering properties in the National Register of Historic Places and meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR Part 60. In my opinion, the property X meets does not meet the National Register Criteria. I recommend that this property be considered significant nationally statewide X locally. (See continuation sheet for additional comments.)


Signature of certifying official/Title

9/29/60
Date

Virginia Department of Historic Resources
State or Federal agency and bureau

In my opinion, the property meets does not meet the National Register criteria. (See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

Signature of commenting or other official/Title

Date

State or Federal agency and bureau

4. National Park Service Certification

I hereby certify that this property is:

 entered in the National Register.
 See continuation sheet.
 determined eligible for the National Register.
 See continuation sheet.
 determined not eligible for the National Register.
 removed from the National Register.
 other (explain): _____

Signature of the Keeper _____

Date of Action _____

5. Classification

Ownership of Property

(Check as many boxes as apply)

☒ private
☐ public-local
☐ public-State
☐ public-Federal

Category of Property

(Check only one box)

☒ building(s)
☐ district
☐ site
☐ structure
☐ object

Number of Resources within Property

(Do not include previously listed resources in the count.)

Contributing	Noncontributing	
1	0	buildings
1	0	sites
0	0	structures
0	0	objects
2	0	Total

Name of related multiple property listing N/A

(Enter "N/A" if property is not part of a multiple property listing.)

Number of contributing resources previously listed

in the National Register 0

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions (Enter categories from instructions)

Category

Subcategory

RELIGION	religious facility (church)
EDUCATION	school
FUNERARY	cemetery

Current Functions (Enter categories from instructions)

Category

Subcategory

WORK IN PROGRESS

7. Description

Architectural Classification (Enter categories from instructions)

No Style

Materials (Enter categories from instructions)

foundation	STONE: Limestone
walls	WOOD
roof	METAL: Tin
other	

Narrative Description

(Describe the historic and current condition of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

8. Statement of Significance

Applicable National Register Criteria

(Mark "x" in one or more boxes for the criteria qualifying the property for National Register listing.)

- ☒ **A** Property is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history.
- ☒ **B** Property is associated with the lives of persons significant in our past.
- ☐ **C** Property embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction or represents the work of a master, or possesses high artistic values, or represents a significant and distinguishable entity whose components lack individual distinction.
- ☐ **D** Property has yielded, or is likely to yield, information important in prehistory or history.

Areas of Significance

(Enter categories from instructions)

ETHNIC HERITAGE: BLACK; EDUCATION

Significant Person Simms, Lucy F.

(Complete if Criterion B is marked above)

Criteria Considerations

(Mark "X" in all the boxes that apply.)

Property is:

- ☐ **A** owned by a religious institution or used for religious purposes.
- ☐ **B** removed from its original location.
- ☐ **C** a birthplace or a grave.
- ☐ **D** a cemetery.
- ☐ **E** a reconstructed building, object, or structure.
- ☐ **F** a commemorative property.
- ☐ **G** less than 50 years of age or achieved significance within the past fifty years.

Period of Significance 1871- circa 1930

Significant Dates 1871, 1877-78

Cultural Affiliation N/A

Architect/Builder Long, Jacob (contractor)

Orndorff, T. J. (tombstone maker)

Narrative Statement of Significance

(Explain the significance of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

9. Major Bibliographical References

Bibliography (Cite the books, articles, and other sources used in preparing this form on one or more continuation sheets.)

Previous documentation on file (NPS):

☐ preliminary determination of individual listing
(36 CFR 67) has been requested
☐ previously listed in the National Register
☐ previously determined eligible by the National Register
☐ designated a National Historic Landmark
☐ recorded by Historic American Buildings Survey

☐ recorded by Historic American Engineering Record

Primary location of additional data:

☒ State Historic Preservation Office
☐ Other State agency
☐ Federal agency
☐ Local government
☐ University
☐ Other
Name of repository: _____

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of Property approximately 0.489 acres

UTM References

(Place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet)

Zone Easting Northing
1 17 695110 4264860
☐ See continuation sheet.

Verbal Boundary Description (Describe the boundaries of the property on a continuation sheet.)

Boundary Justification (Explain why the boundaries were selected on a continuation sheet.)

11. Form Prepared By

name/title	J. Daniel Pezzoni	date	May 9, 2006
organization	Landmark Preservation Associates	telephone	(540) 464-5315
street & number	6 Houston Street	zip code	24450
city or town	Lexington	state	VA

Additional Documentation

Submit the following items with the completed form:

Continuation Sheets

Maps A **USGS map** (7.5 or 15 minute series) indicating the property's location.

A **Sketch map** for historic districts and properties having large acreage or numerous resources.

Photographs Representative **black and white photographs** of the property.

Additional items (Check with the SHPO or FPO for any additional items)

Property Owner

(Complete this item at the request of the SHPO or FPO.)

name	Zenda Heritage LLC c/o Al Jenkins		
street & number	PO Box 2231	telephone	(843) 412-3590
city or town	Harrisonburg	state	VA
		zip code	22803

Paperwork Reduction Act Statement: This information is being collected for applications to the National Register of Historic Places to nominate properties for listing or determine eligibility for listing, to list properties, and to amend existing listings. Response to this request is required to obtain a benefit in accordance with the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended (16 U.S.C. 470 et seq.).

Estimated Burden Statement: Public reporting burden for this form is estimated to average 18.1 hours per response including the time for reviewing instructions, gathering and maintaining data, and completing and reviewing the form. Direct comments regarding this burden estimate or any aspect of this form to the Chief, Administrative Services Division, National Park Service, P.O. Box 37127, Washington, DC 20013-7127; and the Office of Management and Budget, Paperwork Reductions Project (1024-0018), Washington, DC 20503.

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Longs Chapel
Rockingham County, Virginia

NARRATIVE DESCRIPTION

Summary

Longs Chapel, located in the former Zenda community of eastern Rockingham County, Virginia, is a one-story frame church and schoolhouse that was probably built in 1871. The building measures approximately twenty by thirty feet and has a standard gable-fronted nave form with weatherboard siding, metal roofing, stone foundation piers, a small belfry, and an apse added circa 1900. The one-room interior has wood floors, board walls and ceilings, and evidence of former pews and other features. The building faces northwest but for the sake of simplicity the front elevation is described as the north side, the rear elevation as the south side, and so forth. The building has been neglected for many years but stabilization is now underway with the ultimate goal of restoration. Behind the church is a cemetery with multiple grave depressions, fieldstone tombstones, and a number of professionally carved marble monuments. The church and cemetery occupy a 0.489-acre lot on the south side of Fridley's Gap Road (SR 811) approximately two miles south of Lacey Spring, the largest nearby community. The lot slopes downhill from its high point at an elevation of approximately 1,290 feet above sea level at the rear southeast corner. Surrounding parcels are occupied by modern dwellings but historic houses, farm buildings, and fields are visible from the property.

Inventory

1. Longs Chapel. 1871; circa 1900. Contributing building.
2. Cemetery. 1870s. Contributing site.

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Longs Chapel
Rockingham County, Virginia

Chapel Exterior

Longs Chapel stands at a front corner of its sloping parcel on Fridley's Gap Road. It is constructed primarily with cut nails, although a few weatherboards (probably replacements) are attached with wire nails. On the front gable end is a single opening, the main entry, and on each of the sides are two windows. In the entry is a modern wood-panel door installed to secure the building from unauthorized entry. (A historic door, a deteriorated early-twentieth-century wood-frame door that is missing its wood or glass panels, is stored inside.) Reused historic two-light sashes and plywood have been installed in the window openings to secure the building. The former window sashes are reported to have been nine over six. Cast iron pintles survive from former shutters. The door and windows have simple surrounds with traces of red paint. The side eaves and uppermost weatherboards preserve traces of whitewash.

On the rear elevation is an apse with angled sides and wire-nail construction. The apse and main roof are roofed with standing-seam metal which, at least on the main roof, is most likely not original. At the front of the roof ridge is an open gabled belfry on square posts with metal wrapped around their bases. Inside is the post for a former bell, which is secured at its lower end to the ceiling joists inside the roof. A brick stove flue formerly projected near the midpoint of the ridge. The church stands on foundation piers of carefully hewn limestone blocks. The piers are high on the front and diminish in height to the rear where the frame structure is at or below grade. Under the church is a layer of limestone gravel and small rocks. The sills and joists are circular sawn, as are other visible framing members, and the frame and other construction features are reported to be pine. The studs are mortised into the sills. Whether the corner posts and knee braces are also mortised to the sills is unclear, although the knee braces are attached to the sills with heavy cut nails.

Chapel Interior

The interior features worn tongue-and-groove floorboards and circular sawn wall and ceiling boards, all cut-nailed to the frame. The ceiling is painted blue and there are traces of an earlier layer of blue paint. The wall boards are painted white above the level of the former pews. There is some indication that at least some of the boards were once painted pink. From the top of the pews down the boards were formerly painted a red or reddish brown color (probably the nineteenth-century color and possibly original) and later repainted dark brown. The outlines of the former pews are visible on this painted wainscot. The door trim, window trim, and the trim around the apse opening are dark brown. The armrest of one of the pews survives attached to the wall in the corner to the right of the apse opening. The pews at the north end of the space faced towards the apse with a center aisle between them. The pews were shorter at the location of a former stove under the flue to provide ease of circulation around the stove. The pews at the south end of the space faced inward, parallel with the long axis of the church.

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Longs Chapel
Rockingham County, Virginia

The trim that defines the apse opening has a decorative profile. This trim and the wall boards, ceiling boards, and the boards of the raised floor in the apse are wire-nailed. Extending in front of the apse opening are traces on the floor boards of a former dais with complex angled sides. Some accounts describe a dais that was curved in plan; perhaps this was a later dais associated with the apse. There is a trace of red paint on the floor that suggests the base of the dais was painted red, probably the same red as the original painted wainscot. The former dais is said to have had a low rail and steps at each end. Attached to the apse ceiling and to the main ceiling in front of the apse opening are hooks, perhaps for suspending lamps, curtains, or decorations. Near the midpoints of the two side walls are remnants of metal brackets probably associated with former lamp sconces. A shelf or cabinet was formerly attached to the wall in the northeast corner. Crude footholds are nailed to the wall next to the front entry rising to a roof access. Through the opening are visible circular-sawn common rafters that are butted (and presumably nailed) at the ridge. The roof boards are narrow and widely and irregularly spaced, at least as visible through the opening, and they do not appear to have the multiple nails projecting through them that would indicate former wood shingle roofing. It seems likely the roof boards were replaced when the present metal roofing was added in the early twentieth century.

Cemetery

The cemetery contains a diversity of gravemarker types and materials in an area of approximately 100 by 150 feet, roughly a third of an acre. The simplest markers are small slabs of blue-gray limestone that serve as headstones and occasionally footstones. None of these fieldstone markers were observed to be inscribed. Many of the unmarked grave depressions in the cemetery probably had fieldstone markers such as these and perhaps also wooden markers but they were presumably lost during the decades of neglect that the cemetery suffered during the late twentieth century. Similar in form and material to these relatively unworked markers is a small tabular limestone tombstone carved with the depiction of a weeping willow and a border of lightly scribed circles and half-circles. Two cast concrete gravemarkers of blocky form are located side by side (one has a matching smaller concrete footmarker). The better preserved of the two is inscribed with the name (L⁹)ena Brock (1893-99). The other may be inscribed Alice Brock (birth and death dates illegible).

The largest and finest memorials are marble headstones and obelisks carved by regional artisans or perhaps ordered from out of state suppliers. The expertly carved white marble headstone of Mary A. Broadus (1827-1903), "a member of the U. B. Church for 50 years," has a decorative inscription panel, a segmental top, and tassel sides. The white marble headstone of Maria M. Bibbs (1866-80) features a bas relief carving of a dove in a lunette recess. The graves of Mary M. Bibbs' relations Mary E. Bibbs (1891-93) and Jett N. Bibbs (1870-97) are marked by a white marble obelisk carved with low relief ivy leaves and palm fronds and apparently formerly topped by an urn. The Mary and Jett Bibbs obelisk is signed by T. J. Orndorff of Winchester. Another obelisk retains its urn: the gray marble monument of patriarch Dennis Jackson (1850-1930) and his family, decorated with low relief carvings

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Longs Chapel
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of ivy leaves and wheat sheaves and set on a quarry-faced limestone base. The gray marble obelisk of the Strother family (urn broken off) stands surrounded by smaller tombstones for individual family members (inscribed "Father," "J. E. S.," and so forth) in a plot marked by marble posts at the corners.

In addition to the cemetery's gravemarkers are traditional plantings such as periwinkle, daffodils with ruffled blooms, and several boxwoods. In recent decades the cemetery became overgrown with small trees, most of which were recently cut down. Also, the cemetery appears to have been used as a junk yard and is strewn with scrap metal, bottles, and chunks of concrete, which complicates the identification of the remnants of bona fide grave goods. Some of the bottles may have ornamented graves or may have been used as flower pots. So too a rusted and broken metal bedstead may have served as a grave ornament, as these were often used to frame graves and represent death as sleep.

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Longs Chapel
Rockingham County, Virginia

NARRATIVE STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

Summary

Longs Chapel, located in Rockingham County, Virginia, is an 1871 church and schoolhouse that served the former African American community of Zenda and surrounding countryside. The simple frame building features a small belfry, a board-sheathed interior, and an apse addition. Originally affiliated with the Church of the United Brethren, the chapel was built under the direction of a white farmer and Brethren named Jacob Long. The chapel also served as the Athens Colored School during its early years, and it was here that celebrated Harrisonburg educator Lucy F. Simms first taught beginning in the 1870s. Behind the chapel lies a cemetery that contains gravemarkers ranging in sophistication from uninscribed fieldstones to stylish marble obelisks carved by professional stonecutters. After a long period of abandonment the chapel and cemetery are now in the early stages of rehabilitation by the Longs Chapel Preservation Society.

Applicable Criteria

Longs Chapel is eligible under Criteria A and B for its association with Rockingham County's black ethnic heritage and in the education area of significance for its association with the early career of educator Lucy F. Simms and as a one-room rural school dating to the beginnings of public education for African Americans during Reconstruction. Longs Chapel is the only extant building in Virginia where Simms is known to have taught. The period of significance begins with the probable date of construction of the chapel in 1871 and extends to circa 1930, representing the final period of use for the building and cemetery in the 1920s and 1930s. Longs Chapel is eligible at the local level of significance.

Acknowledgments

The nomination was primarily assisted by Alfred Jenkins of the Longs Chapel Preservation Society, the sponsor of the nomination. Other individuals and organizations that assisted the project included David Jenkins, Robin Jenkins, Nancy Bondurant Jones, the Rockingham County Department of Community Development, and David Edwards, Joanna Evans, Jean McRae and Marc Wagner of the Virginia Department of Historic Resources.

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Longs Chapel
Rockingham County, Virginia

Historic Context

Longs Chapel dates its official origins to the acquisition of the church site by trustees of the Church of the United Brethren of Christ on September 23, 1869, but the Brethren roots of the church date back to the antebellum period. Mary A. Bibbs (1827-1903), who is buried in the cemetery behind the chapel, joined the Church of the United Brethren in 1853, according to her tombstone. The official website of the Church of the United Brethren dates the denomination's origins to an interdenominational meeting held in Pennsylvania in 1767. The Brethren of Virginia were sympathetic to the state's black population and although a small number of Brethren owned slaves, the denomination as a whole opposed slave ownership and hiring. A "congregation of colored people" was already in existence in the Zenda area in September 1869 when the Brethren purchased approximately half an acre on Fridley's Gap Road "for the purpose of a church, burial grounds and a school house." The people for whom the church was to be erected included former members of Rockingham County's slave population, which accounted for 11.6% of the county's population in 1860.¹

According to descendants of church members, Longs Chapel was built in 1871. A Lacey Spring-area landowner named Jacob Long (circa 1803-87) is said to have built the church, which was named in his honor. Long was a member of the Church of the United Brethren—his death is recorded in a Brethren "Record of Deaths and Funerals"—and he was opposed to slavery before the Civil War. The 1860 federal census lists him as a farmer and the 1880 census describes him as a farm hand (the 1880 census may be inaccurate; Long had substantial landholdings both before and after the Civil War). According to his great-grandson, Jacob O. Long Jr., Long was a "promoter" of sorts who probably helped organize the construction of Longs Chapel as well as other religious buildings—he is credited with the construction of a United Brethren parsonage at Lacey Spring—rather than a carpenter or builder per se. The modern concept of general contractor may apply best to his responsibilities. There is a tradition that local whites donated materials for the church and local blacks are said to have contributed labor.²

The cemetery was apparently in existence by December 1874, the month of the earliest known obit date from a tombstone (that of William Hardy Richardson, 1872-74). Associated with the church for an unknown period was a "bush-meeting," probably a camp meeting held under a brush arbor. At these meetings, according to a former church attendee, "Families brought picnics and enjoyed a whole Sunday of preaching, singing, and fellowship." It may be that the congregation met at first under a brush arbor, as was often the case for fledgling African American congregations after the Civil War, although there is no record of this at Longs Chapel. The establishment of the church and cemetery (and a school, discussed below) appears to have been the principal factor in the formation of the black community of Zenda, which was originally known as Athens. Census research by Eastern Mennonite University student Phil Siegrist suggests the community had not yet formed by the 1870 federal census.

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Longs Chapel
Rockingham County, Virginia

An 1885 atlas depicts a row of dwellings along the road near the chapel—identified as “Long Chapel”—and several of the names associated with these dwellings are the same as African American heads of household that cluster together in the 1880 census, an indication that the community had come into existence by 1880. The community was originally known as Athens—perhaps a reflection of its important educational component—but it later became known as Zenda after the name of a post office established nearby around the turn of the twentieth century. According to local tradition, the daughter of the storekeeper in whose store the post office was opened suggested the name while reading *The Prisoner of Zenda* (1894) by Anthony Hope.³

From the work of Phil Siegrist and others, a picture of the Zenda community emerges. Names of heads of household that appear in the 1880 federal census and the 1885 atlas include Reuben Billhimer, Henry Carter, William (Bill) Timber, John (Jack) Watson and a member of the Grant family. In addition the 1885 atlas shows Richard Fortune and Jackson Wilson as residents of the community nucleus. Siegrist counts fifty-seven African American inhabitants of the Zenda area in 1880 and ninety-six in 1900. Occupations listed in the 1880 census were indicative of the socioeconomic status of rural blacks: servant, keeping house, farm hand and farmer. In contrast, the 1900 census shows greater diversity. Menial or domestic occupations were still represented—day laborer, servant, housekeeper—but there were also a carpenter, a mail carrier, a pastor (?), and three school teachers. James Madison University professor Paul C. Cline has also studied Zenda and a contemporaneous and comparable black community, Peak, located in the western part of Rockingham County. Of both communities Cline notes the economic interrelationships between the black community and the surrounding white community although there was separation in social and educational institutions.⁴

A public school was built at Zenda in 1882, but prior to that date Longs Chapel doubled as a schoolhouse. Dual use of rural church building as schoolhouses was common in Virginia’s African American communities in the decades after the Civil War—Rockbridge County’s 1870s Cedar Hill Church being one of many examples—as was also the case in rural white communities. Rockingham County historian Dale McAllister dates the establishment of a school at Zenda to before 1877. It was in that year that noted local African American educator Lucy F. Simms (1855-1934) went to Zenda upon graduating from the Hampton Institute. Simms contributed to the development of public education for blacks in the Rockingham-Harrisonburg community for over half a century. Dale McAllister writes, “Born into slavery, successful college graduate, and exemplary school teacher for more than half a century, Lucy Simms personified the best of African-American education in Harrisonburg and Rockingham County. She served as an example of caring, hope, and personal success for three generations of students. Her life was dedicated to the moral and educational uplifting of the local black community.” Historian John W. Wayland has written of Simms’s devotion to the cause of black education, and notes that she was a classmate of Booker T. Washington at Hampton Institute. Of her own aspirations Simms wrote early in her teaching career, “I tried to sow such seed in that mountain soil that it should yield, in time, abundant crops.”⁵

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Longs Chapel
Rockingham County, Virginia

According to McAllister, Simms also taught at Zenda prior to attending Hampton Institute in 1874, perhaps as early as 1872. Of her teaching experience at Zenda during the years 1877 and 1878 Simms wrote circa 1891, "I had a very pleasant school, in a very pleasant neighborhood, but not very pleasant pay." Many black educators of Simms's generation had to contend with white antipathy towards public education for blacks; indeed, many among the post-bellum Virginia elite resisted the concept of public education for whites as well as blacks, as historian William Link has noted. Simms, however, found that a "very friendly relation exists between the races" in Rockingham County, and McAllister has documented instances of cooperation between whites and blacks on matters of education.⁶

There is conflicting evidence for how long Simms taught at Longs Chapel, which was also known by the name of Athens Colored School. By her own account Simms and another teacher became dissatisfied with the low and irregular pay and taught in Maryland for a number of years before returning to teach at the Effinger School in Harrisonburg in 1882. Simms taught in the Effinger School for over fifty years until shortly before her death in 1934. She served as the school's second principal during the 1883-84 school year and was one of only two female principals in the history of the school (the other female principal also served for a single year). Simms was the only African American educator to work continuously in Harrisonburg from 1882 until 1934; no other black educator came close to equaling her years of devotion to the community. "It is said," writes Dale McAllister, "that Miss Simms missed only one half-day of teaching due to sickness during her entire career, until her final illness." After her death Simms was honored first by a move to name an athletic field constructed in Harrisonburg in 1934 for her and then in 1938 by the naming of the newly opened Lucy F. Simms Elementary School, Harrisonburg's principal African American school until desegregation. Dale McAllister writes, "Born into slavery, successful college graduate, and exemplary school teacher for more than half a century, Lucy Simms personified the best of African-American education in Harrisonburg and Rockingham County. She served as an example of caring, hope, and personal success for three generations of students. Her life was dedicated to the moral and educational uplifting of the local black community." Of her own aspirations Simms wrote early in her teaching career, "I tried to sow such seed in that mountain soil that it should yield, in time, abundant crops."⁷

School use of Longs Chapel presumably ceased with the construction of a purpose-built school nearby in 1882. By the late 1880s the Longs Chapel cemetery received frequent use. A Brethren death and funeral register records several funerals and/or burials at "Long's Chapel at Athens, Va." in 1886 and 1887. A surviving Longs Chapel minute book for the year 1900 lists forty-seven members and the minister, B. N. Stevens, at a time when Longs Chapel remained affiliated with the Church of the United Brethren. The period around 1900 marked the heyday of the Zenda community. From a peak population of ninety-six that year, counted by Phil Siegrist from federal census returns, the population went into abrupt decline. In 1910 there were thirty-three inhabitants and in 1920 there were twenty-three, less than a quarter of the 1900 figure. (There are presently no descendants of historic-period African American residents of Zenda living in the vicinity.) Siegrist suggests a number of reasons for

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Longs Chapel
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Zenda's decline. Increased mobility enabled the inhabitants to seek economic opportunities in Harrisonburg and elsewhere. Educational opportunities were also a factor. "Some of the African-Americans moved to Harrisonburg after school consolidations," Siegrist writes, "because it was the only way that their children could get a high-school education." A similar exodus, spurred by a desire for improved education, depopulated rural black communities in Rockbridge County during the same period. The school at Zenda closed in 1925 and the last services at Longs Chapel were held in the late 1920s. In a 1997 interview former church attendee Lucille Ewell stated that her grandfather, Edward Watson, was the last person to be buried in the cemetery in 1935. The cemetery became overgrown and the chapel was used as a hay barn during the second half of the twentieth century. In early 2005 the Longs Chapel Preservation Society (LCPS) was incorporated to rehabilitate the deteriorated chapel and to tend the cemetery. The LCPS Board of Directors consists of President Alfred Jenkins Jr., Vice President Robin Jenkins, Secretary Kellee Jenkins, and Treasurer David Jenkins. In late 2005 the LCPS was granted tax-exempt non-profit status and began receiving tax-deductible contributions. The LCPS is exploring options for the use of the chapel. A museum and memorial to the accomplishments and contributions of the community and to Lucy Simms are being considered and a relationship has formed with a group in Harrisonburg devoted to the preservation of the Lucy F. Simms Elementary School.⁸

Architectural and Artistic Discussion

Longs Chapel is representative of the smaller United Brethren churches built in western Virginia during the late nineteenth century. According to documentation by Virginia Brethren historian Roger E. Sappington, the state's earliest Brethren churches, constructed during the period of the 1820s through the 1850s, were characterized by simple gabled domestic forms with the principal entry or entries located on the non-gable side. Simplicity was a core tenet of Brethren church architecture. In 1837 the denomination's *Discipline* stated, "Let all our meeting houses be built plainly and neatly, with free seats, and not more expensive than necessary." After the Civil War the denomination switched to the normative gable-entry church form. Longs Chapel is very similar to a group of "outlying mission posts" established by the Copper Hill congregation of Floyd County in the 1880s. Like Longs Chapel, at least three of the four Floyd County chapels were small astylistic buildings of weatherboarded frame construction with a main entry in the gable end and two windows on each side. After 1900 the larger Brethren congregations turned increasingly to Gothic Revival buildings of more complex form. As a small gable-fronted one-room building Longs Chapel is also reminiscent of the first generation of white and black public schools built in Virginia after the Civil War. A notable similarity exists between Longs Chapel and Harrisonburg's first African American schoolhouse. The 1868 Whipple School, as the town schoolhouse was known, was elevated above three feet off the ground on "blocks or pillars," described by Wayland as being wooden. The tall hewn limestone piers under the front elevation of Longs Chapel are similar in form. Elevating Longs Chapel and the Whipple School may have served to help preserve their wooden structures from decay and to prevent access to the interior by free

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Longs Chapel
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ranging swine and other animals. Of the Whipple School Wayland writes, "The ample space beneath was sometimes used for the packing away of wood, sometimes as a shelter for homeless canines, but more frequently as a temporary retreat for an escaping urchin."⁹

The chapel has a number of architectural features worthy of note. The floor traces in front of the apse point to an original pulpit dais of decorative form. The removal of this dais and the addition of the apse around the turn of the twentieth century—as suggested by the use of wire nails—suggest a need for more room on the interior. The period around 1900 coincided with Zenda's peak population, which presumably translated into higher church attendance and space needs. The form of the apse opening trim recalls window and door surround treatments of the decades immediately following the Civil War and would have been out of style by 1900. The layer of limestone gravel and small rocks under the church, which may date to the late nineteenth century or early twentieth century, appears to have served to prevent weeds from growing there (the height of the front sills above grade would have allowed ample room and light for weeds). It may also have presented a more tidy appearance than bare earth.

The cemetery and its gravemarkers also deserve comment. Fieldstones are probably the most numerous gravemarker type and there were probably many more historically than now. Likewise, impermanent wooden headboards and footboards may once have been numerous, although none have been documented. Of the several burials known to have taken place in the cemetery in 1886 and 1887, none are apparently indicated by inscribed markers. Only a handful of monuments of local or vernacular craftsmanship have been observed. One is the limestone tombstone depicting a weeping willow, a standard nineteenth-century funerary motif. The willow tombstone has an unfinished back, a possible indication that it was discarded by the stonecutter before it was completed owing to some flaw or mistake in its design. If so this may have made it more affordable to the family that purchased it. Also in this class are the two Brock family concrete monuments, one of which has an obit date of 1899. It is conceivable that the 1899 concrete marker could have been made that year, but because concrete became much more common as a building material in the following decade it may be that the marker is back dated by a number of years. The number of professionally carved marble tombstones points to a period of relative affluence in the community around 1900. The obit dates on these markers cluster in the years before and after the turn of the twentieth century, which was also a period when marble obelisks such as those at Longs Chapel were produced in great numbers and sold through mail order houses like Sears, Roebuck. The fancier tombstones are carved with stock Victorian motifs such as doves, palm fronds, wheat sheaves and ivy.

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Of the many bottles observed strewn around the cemetery, whisky bottles constitute a high percentage. Liquor bottles would seem an unlikely choice to honor the deceased and instead may be ordinary trash. Or not—whisky was used for medicinal purposes, and grave goods were often items used by the deceased during their final illness. African American grave goods often included household items or symbolic objects interpreted as a survival of West African traditions. The Longs Chapel cemetery bears some similarity to African American cemeteries described by archaeologist Thomas S. Klatka in his study of Roanoke County cemeteries. In its basic form the Longs Chapel cemetery is similar to rural white cemeteries—a similarity noted in Roanoke County as well—and the existence of unmarked graves and uninscribed fieldstones is also typical of traditional African American cemeteries in the Roanoke area. Uninscribed gravemarkers are found as well in historic Albemarle County African American cemeteries researched by Lynn Rainville.¹⁰

ENDNOTES

1. May et al, “Long’s Chapel,” 8.1; Sappington, *Brethren in Virginia*, 36, 61-63; Siegrist, “Captured by Zenda;” Church of the United Brethren in Christ USA website.

2. Alfred Jenkins and Jacob O. Long Jr. personal communication; May et al, “Long’s Chapel,” 8.1; Siegrist, “Captured by Zenda;” Arrington and Reid, “Record of the Churches of the Lacey Spring Circuit;” “Long’s Chapel;” U. S. census. Some evidence suggests Longs Chapel may have served the community as an interdenominational meeting place. Longs Chapel attendee Edward Watson (1855-1935) was a member of the African Methodist Episcopal denomination. Also, an 1880 statewide business directory lists four United Brethren churches in Rockingham County but not Longs Chapel, although this may be an omission (Lucille Ewell interview; Chataigne, *Chataigne's Virginia Business Directory and Gazetteer, 1880-81*, 453).

3. Alfred Jenkins personal communication; Cline, “Two Black Communities;” Siegrist, “Captured by Zenda.” For the sake of clarity the community is referred to by its later name of Zenda in this nomination.

4. Siegrist, “Captured by Zenda;” Cline, “Two Black Communities.”

5. Pezzoni, “Cedar Hill Church and Cemeteries;” McAllister, “Dancing on the Stream of Time,” 10; Siegrist, “Captured by Zenda;” *Twenty-two years work of the Hampton Normal and Agricultural Institute*, 85-86; Link, *A Hard Country and a Lonely Place*, 18. In her reminiscence published in 1891, Simms identified the location of her school as the nearby community of Lacey Spring, however McAllister does not identify a black school at Lacey Spring.

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6. *Twenty-two years work of the Hampton Normal and Agricultural Institute*, 85; Link, *A Hard Country and a Lonely Place*, 18; McAllister, "Dancing on the Stream of Time," 9.

7. *Twenty-two years work of the Hampton Normal and Agricultural Institute*, 85; Wayland, *Historic Harrisonburg*, 348-350. An obituary in the July 11, 1934, issue of the *Harrisonburg Daily News Record* states that Simms taught for two years at Zenda and was appointed a teacher in Harrisonburg on August 2, 1878, in conflict with Simms' own account.

8. Alfred Jenkins and David M. Jenkins personal communication; May et al, "Long's Chapel," 8.2; Siegrist, "Captured by Zenda;" Arrington and Reid, "Record of the Churches of the Lacey Spring Circuit;" Pezzoni, "Cedar Hill Church and Cemeteries;" Lucille Ewell interview.

9. Sappington, *Brethren in Virginia*, 37-47, 284-285; Church of the United Brethren in Christ USA website; McAllister, "Dancing on the Stream of Time," 7. Wayland, *Historic Harrisonburg*, 346-347.

10. Pezzoni, "Virginian to the Grave," 71; Little, *Sticks and Stones*, 237; Klatka, "Cultural Expressions," 27; Rainville, "African American Cemeteries;" Patterson, "Grave Markers," 480.

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GEOGRAPHIC AL DATA

Verbal Boundary Description

The nominated area corresponds to Rockingham County Tax Parcel 81 ((A)) 104 comprising 0.489 acres.

Boundary Justification

The nominated area comprises the parcel on which Longs Chapel and its cemetery are located. Surrounding parcels are not historically associated with the chapel and cemetery.

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PHOTOGRAPHS

All photographs are of:

LONGS CHAPEL

Rockingham County, Virginia

DHR file no. 082-5264

J. Daniel Pezzoni, Photographer

Negatives located at Virginia Department of Historic Resources Archives, Richmond, Virginia.

DATE: April 2006

VIEW OF: Chapel east and north (front) sides. View looking southwest.

NEG. NO.: 22875:17

PHOTO 1 OF 6

DATE: April 2006

VIEW OF: Chapel south and east sides. View looking north.

NEG. NO.: 22875:5

PHOTO 2 OF 6

DATE: April 2006

VIEW OF: Cemetery with chapel (west and south sides) beyond. View looking northeast.

NEG. NO.: 22875:9

PHOTO 3 OF 6

DATE: April 2006

VIEW OF: Chapel interior, south and west walls.

NEG. NO.: 22875:19

PHOTO 4 OF 6

DATE: April 2006

VIEW OF: Chapel interior, west and north walls.

NEG. NO.: 22875:21

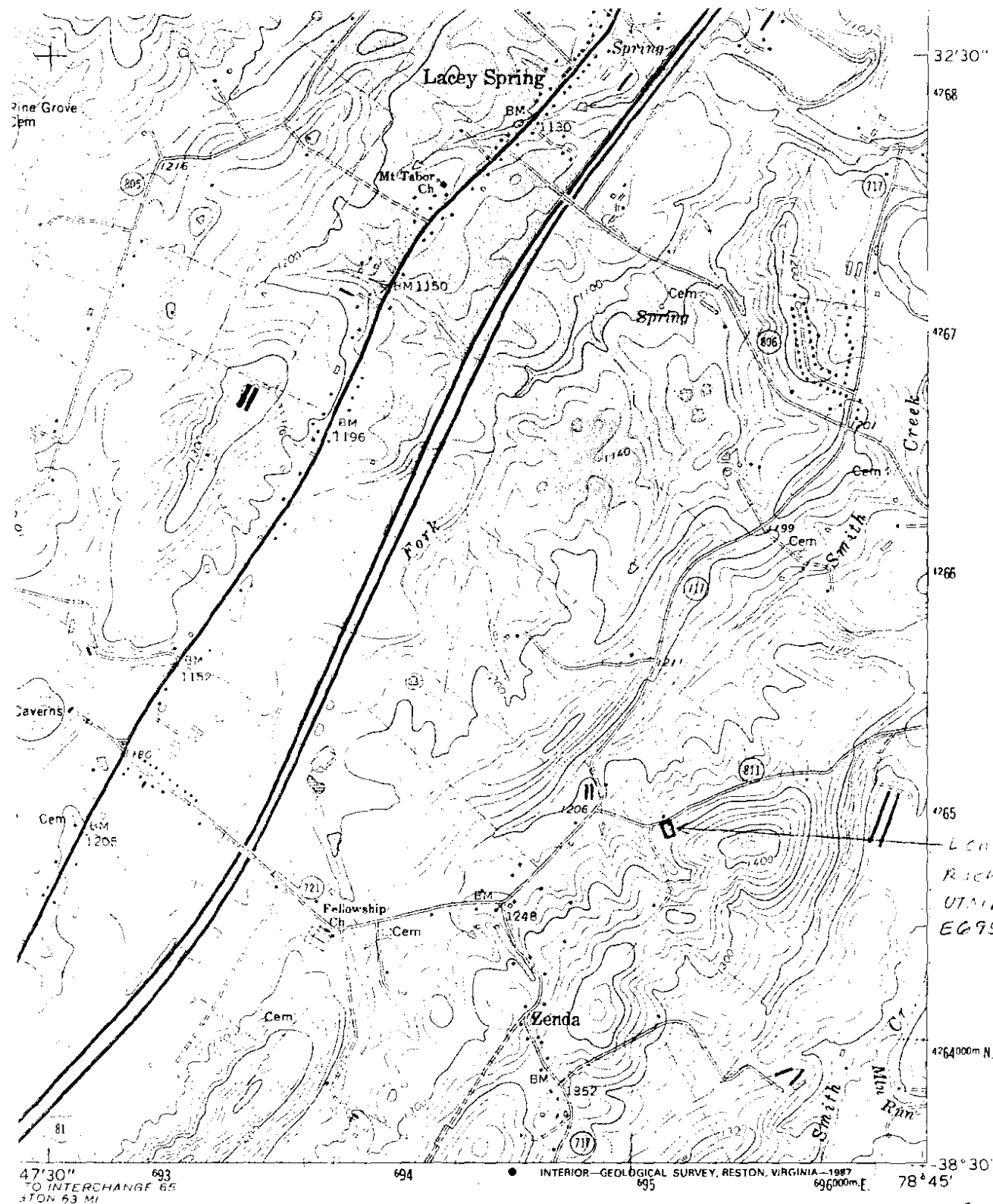
PHOTO 5 OF 6

DATE: April 2006

VIEW OF: Weeping willow tombstone in cemetery.

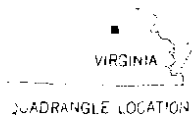
NEG. NO.: 22875:24

PHOTO 6 OF 6



ROAD CLASSIFICATION

Primary highway, all weather, hard surface	Light-duty road, all weather, improved surface
Secondary highway, all weather, hard surface	Unimproved road, fair or dry weather
○ Interstate Route	○ U. S. Route ○ State Route



Revisions shown in purple and woodland compiled in cooperation with Commonwealth of Virginia agencies from aerial photographs taken 1984 and other sources. This information not field checked. Map edited 1987

BROADWAY, VA.

SE/4 BROADWAY 15' QUADRANGLE
38078-E7-TF-024

1967

PHOTOREVISED 1987
DMA 5261 III SE-SERIES V834

SE/4 BROADWAY 15' QUADRANGLE
38078-E7-TF-024